



SD ANIMAL INDUSTRY BOARD

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NEWS RELEASE

**Contact: Sam D. Holland, DVM, State Veterinarian
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Anthrax has again appeared in South Dakota livestock. Dr. Sam Holland, State Veterinarian, reports the disease has struck a group of unvaccinated cattle in Hyde County.

The State Veterinarian was called on Sunday, July 23, and the state veterinary diagnostic lab confirmed the diagnosis on Monday, July 24th.

Dr. Holland reports the case involves a pasture containing a group of approximately 100 unvaccinated cow-calf pairs with initial death loss of 5 cows.

"In spite of repeated recommendations, some producers fail to preventatively vaccinate their herds," says Dr. Holland. The infected herd was scheduled to be immediately treated with antibiotics, vaccinated and carcasses properly disposed of under the supervision of the local veterinary practitioner and the Animal Industry Board.

Anthrax is a very serious quarantinable disease because it can cause the rapid loss of a large number of animals in a very short time. Animals are often found dead with no illness detected. Anthrax is communicable to humans and other animals through carcasses, so strict enforcement of quarantine and proper burning and burying of carcasses suspected to have died from Anthrax is important. Anthrax is not usually spread from animal to animal and quarantines are imposed to prevent further soil contamination by movement of affected livestock.

Dr. Holland states producers and veterinarians have been urged to make anthrax vaccination part of routine health programs. Not doing so presents the risk of further environmental contamination, animal and public health risks, fire risks, and associated costs.

Dr. Holland reports that Anthrax spores survive in contaminated soil indefinitely and that much of South Dakota has the potential of experiencing an outbreak.

Significant climate changes such as drought, floods, and winds can expose Anthrax spores to grazing livestock. Alkaline soils, high humidity and high temperatures present conditions for the Anthrax spores to vegetate and become infectious to grazing livestock.

Dr. Holland says he advised practicing veterinarians to be alert for Anthrax in his April and July newsletters. Rendering companies have also been alerted so that carcasses are not rendered but properly burned and buried on the farm.

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